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PROGRAM Jack Anderson STATION WTOP Radio
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SUBJECT Restrictions on the CIA

JACK ANDERSON: Will the Central Intelligence Agency be unleashed once again? I'll be back in a minute with an exclusive report.

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ANDERSON: Legislation has just sailed through the House which would begin to unshackle the Central Intelligence Agency. It would reduce the number of House committees watching over the CIA from seven to two.

Well, this doesn't mean the bill will pass the Senate, but the tide is turning. The spy agency is asking for greater freedom to recruit agents and to employ them.

Now, it's popular these days to blame the restrictions on the CIA's operations for its intelligence failures in Iran and Cuba. But in my opinion, it's the people at the top who are to blame.

In Iran, for instance, CIA operatives accurately reported that the Shah was in trouble. But the agency's top brass were close to the Shah. He gave them carte blanche to run any operations or build any installations they wished to in Iran. They kept assuring the President that their friend the Shah would never be overthrown.

It was politics at the top, not any restrictions imposed on the agency, which has hamstrung the CIA.

In a related story, a former CIA Deputy Director is now directing a little-known organization of the agency's alumni.